

Editor, Wife Pulled from Line At White House, Quit Reception

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A newspaper editor said yesterday that he and his wife were taken from a White House reception line by a Secret Service agent and asked what they planned to say when they met President Nixon. The editor called it "a chilling experience."

A. N. Romm of the Middletown, N.Y., Times Herald-Record and his wife, Ethel, were among almost 1,000 editors invited to the Executive Mansion on Thursday.

He said the agent, who identified himself as Robert Taylor, politely explained he heard that Mrs. Romm mentioned at another reception Wednesday that she liked to discuss current issues with persons she met on such occasions.

"Mr Taylor wanted to know her intentions and wanted her

assurance that she wouldn't do that," Romm said.

The editor said his wife, a writer herself, "always felt compelled to say something relevant" when she met Presidents but "she always stifled that compulsion." He said "someone must have felt obliged to pass on that information to the Secret Service."

"Mrs. Romm answered Taylor's direct question directly," he said. "Namely, no, she wasn't going to raise any subject as she passed through the receiving line."

The incident was brought to light at a panel of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, currently meeting here, by Tom Teepe, associate editor of the Dayton, Ohio, Daily News. Teepe thought ASNE should consider action.

Romm said he became con-

cerned whether that was really the agent's job.

"I suggested we needed no lessons in Presidential receiving line behavior and asked if he (Taylor) was concerned about security."

The editor said the agent, still very polite, said, "no, just about the President's time."

"I took my wife by the hand and we walked off the grounds. We just didn't feel like staying."

A spokesman for the Secret Service said the agency would have no comment but added "the Secret Service talks with persons daily in line with our protective activities."

Herbert G. Klein, the president's communications director and a former newspaper editor, apologized to Romm and said the agent made a mistake.